

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties number: BA-2695

Name: B-0225/ Mr. Vista Rd. over Sweathouse  
Rn.

The bridge referenced herein was inventoried by the Maryland State Highway Administration as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory, and SHA provided the Trust with eligibility determinations in February 2001. The Trust accepted the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. The bridge received the following determination of eligibility.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST	
Eligibility Recommended _____	Eligibility Not Recommended <u>X</u>
Criteria: <u>  </u> A <u>  </u> B <u>  </u> C <u>  </u> D Considerations: <u>  </u> A <u>  </u> B <u>  </u> C <u>  </u> D <u>  </u> E <u>  </u> F <u>  </u> G <u>  </u> None	
Comments: _____ _____ _____	
Reviewer, OPS: <u>Anne E. Bruder</u>	Date: <u>  3 April 2001  </u>
Reviewer, NR Program: <u>Peter E. Kurtze</u>	Date: <u>  3 April 2001  </u>

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC BRIDGES  
HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY  
MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION/  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MHT No. BA-2695

SHA Bridge No. B 0225

Bridge name Mount Vista Road over Sweathouse  
Branch

LOCATION:

Street/Road name and number [facility carried] Mount Vista Road

City/town Mt. Vista 0.6 mi E of MD 147 Vicinity X

County Baltimore

This bridge projects over: Road      Railway      Water X Land     

Ownership: State      County X Municipal      Other     

HISTORIC STATUS:

Is bridge located within a designated historic district? Yes      No X

National Register-listed district      National Register-determined-eligible district     

Locally-designated district      Other     

Name of district     

BRIDGE TYPE:

Timber Bridge     :

Beam Bridge      Truss -Covered      Trestle      Timber-And-Concrete     

Stone Arch Bridge     

Metal Truss Bridge     

Movable Bridge     :

Swing      Bascule Single Leaf      Bascule Multiple Leaf     

Vertical Lift      Retractable      Pontoon     

Metal Girder     :

Rolled Girder      Rolled Girder Concrete Encased     

Plate Girder      Plate Girder Concrete Encased     

Metal Suspension     

Metal Arch     

Metal Cantilever     

Concrete X:

Concrete Arch      Concrete Slab X Concrete Beam      Rigid Frame     

Other      Type Name

**DESCRIPTION:**Setting: Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Small town \_\_\_\_\_ Rural X

**Describe Setting:** Bridge B0225 carries Mount Vista Road in an east-west direction over the Sweathouse Branch which flows in a southerly direction. The area is developed with scattered houses near the bridge, and a wooded area around the bridge.

**Describe Superstructure And Substructure:**

Bridge B0225 is a two span continuous concrete slab bridge on concrete abutments, a concrete central pier and concrete wingwalls. The bridge was built in 1920. The curb to curb width is 20.1 feet and the deck out to out width is 22.1 feet. The spans are 14.0 feet and the overall length of the structure is 29.0 feet. The skew is 17 degrees. The wingwalls are flared approximately 20 degrees to the centerline of the bridge. The parapets are solid concrete and integral to the deck. The roadway supports two way traffic. The bridge is posted for restricted loads.

The 1993 inspection report described the bridge as in poor condition. The deck, both top and bottom, is poor with spalling, hollow sounds and delaminations. The substructure was described as satisfactory with minor cracking; the pier had moderate scaling on the upstream end.

**Discuss Major Alterations:**

Baltimore County files do not indicate any alterations.

**HISTORY:**

**WHEN was bridge built (actual date or date range)** 1920

**This date is:** Actual X Estimated \_\_\_\_\_

**Source of date:** Plaque \_\_\_\_\_ Design plans \_\_\_\_\_ County bridge files/inspection form X

**Other (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHY was the bridge built?**

The need for a more efficient transportation network and increased load capacity in the decades following World War I.

**WHO was the designer?**

State Highway Administration

**WHO was the builder?**

Unknown

**WHY was the bridge altered?**

Unknown

**Was this bridge built as part of an organized bridge-building campaign?**

As part of an effort by the State to increase load capacity on secondary roads during the 1920s.

**SURVEYOR/HISTORIAN ANALYSIS:**

**This bridge may have National Register significance for its association with:**

A - Events \_\_\_\_\_ B- Person \_\_\_\_\_

C- Engineering/architectural character \_\_\_\_\_

This bridge does not have National Register significance.

**Was the bridge constructed in response to significant events in Maryland or local history?**

Reinforced concrete slab bridges are a twentieth century structure type, easily adapted to the need for expedient engineering solutions. Reinforced concrete technology developed rapidly in the early twentieth century with early recognition of the potential for standardized design. The first U.S. attempt to standardize concrete design specifications came in 1903-04 with the formation of the Joint Committee on Concrete and Reinforced Concrete of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Maryland's road and bridge improvement programs mirrored economic cycles. The first road improvement program of the State Roads Commission was a 7 year program, starting with the Commission's establishment in 1908 and ending in 1915. Due to World War I, the period from 1916-1920 was one of relative inactivity; only roads of first priority were built. Truck traffic resulting from war-related factories and military installations generated new, heavy traffic unanticipated by the builders of the early road system. From 1920 to 1929, numerous highway improvements occurred in response to the increase in Maryland motor vehicles from 103,000 in 1920 to 320,000 in 1929, with emphasis on the secondary system of feeder roads which moved traffic from the primary roads built before World War I. After World War I, Maryland's bridge system also was appraised as too narrow and structurally inadequate for the increasing traffic, with plans for an expanded bridge program to be handled by the Bridge Division, set up in 1920. In 1920 under Chapter 508 of the Acts of 1920 the State issued a bond of \$3,000,000.00 for road construction; the primary purpose of these monies was to meet the state obligations involving the construction of rural post roads. The secondary purpose of these monies was to fund [with an equal sum from the counties] the building of lateral roads. The number of hard surfaced roads on the state system grew from 2000 in 1920 to 3200 in 1930. By 1930, Maryland's primary system had become inadequate to the huge freight trucks and volume of passenger cars in use, with major improvements occurring in the late 1930s. Most improvements to local roads waited until the years after World War II.

With a diverse topographical domain encompassing numerous small and large crossings, Maryland engineers quickly recognized the need for expedient design and construction.

In the early years, there was a need to replace the numerous single lane timber bridges. Walter Wilson Crosby, Chief Engineer stated in 1906, "The general plan has been to replace these [wood bridges] with pipe culverts or concrete bridges and thus forever do away with the further expense of the maintenance of expensive and dangerous wooden structures". Within a few years, readily constructed standardized bridges of concrete were being built throughout the state.

The creation of standard plans and a description of their use was first announced in the 1912-15 Reports of the State Roads Commission whereby bridges spanning up to 36 feet were to use standardized designs.

Published on a single sheet, the 1912 Standard Plans included those structures that were amenable to such an approach: slab spans, (deck) girder spans, box culverts, box bridges, abutments, and piers (State Roads Commission 1912). Slab spans, with lengths of 6 to 16 feet in two foot increments, featured a solid parapet that was integrated into the slab, with a roadway of 22 feet.

In the Report for the years 1916-1919, a revision of the standard plans was noted:

During the four years covered by this report, it has been found necessary to revise our standard plans for culverts and bridges, to take care of the increased tonnage which they have been forced to carry. Army cantonments...increased their operations several hundred per cent, and the brunt of the enormous truck traffic resulting therefrom, was borne by the

State Roads of Maryland. In addition to these war activities, freight motor lines from Baltimore to Washington, Philadelphia, New York, and various points throughout Maryland, and the weight of many of these trucks when loaded, was in excess of the loads for which our early bridges were designed (State Roads Commission 1920:56).

Published on separate sheets, the new standard plans (State Roads Commission 1919) for slab bridges reveal that the major changes was an increase in roadway width from 22 feet to 24 feet and a redesign of the reinforcement. The slab spans continued to feature solid parapets integrated into the span. The range of span lengths remained 6 to 16 feet, but the next year (1920) witnessed the issue of a supplemental plan for a 20 foot long slab span (State Roads Commission 1920).

Based upon documentary evidence, Baltimore County and City were the early pioneers in concrete bridge building in Maryland. The first reinforced concrete bridge documented in Maryland was the bridge at Sherwood Station, built in 1903 by Baltimore County.

Evidence from historic maps suggests that almost all of the extant concrete slab bridges built before 1940 in Baltimore County replaced earlier bridges. With the exception of two bridges, all of these structures lie on roads whose alignments have changed little since the middle of the nineteenth century. The two exceptions are both located on Shelbourne Avenue in Arbutus. Shelbourne Avenue does not appear on the 1850 map of Baltimore County but does appear on the 1915 map. Both concrete slabs bridges on Shelbourne Avenue, however, were built after 1915. The evidence therefore suggests that these two bridges were also built to replace previous structures.

**When the bridge was built and/or given a major alteration, did it have a significant impact on the growth and development of the area?**

There is no evidence to suggest that the construction of this bridge had a significant impact on the growth and development of this area.

**Is the bridge located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation?**

**Would the bridge add to or detract from the historic/visual character of the potential district?**

The bridge is not located in an area which may be eligible for historic designation.

**Is the bridge a significant example of its type?**

This bridge is an undistinguished example of a concrete bridge.

**Does the bridge retain integrity of important elements described in Context Addendum?**

The character defining elements are in place but seriously deteriorated.

**Is the bridge a significant example of the work of a manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer?**

The bridge is not a significant example of the work a manufacturer, designer, and/or engineer.

**Should the bridge be given further study before an evaluation of its significance is made?**

No additional study will be needed before an evaluation of the significance of this bridge is made.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

County inspection/bridge files           X           SHA inspection/bridge files                       
Other (list):

BA-2695

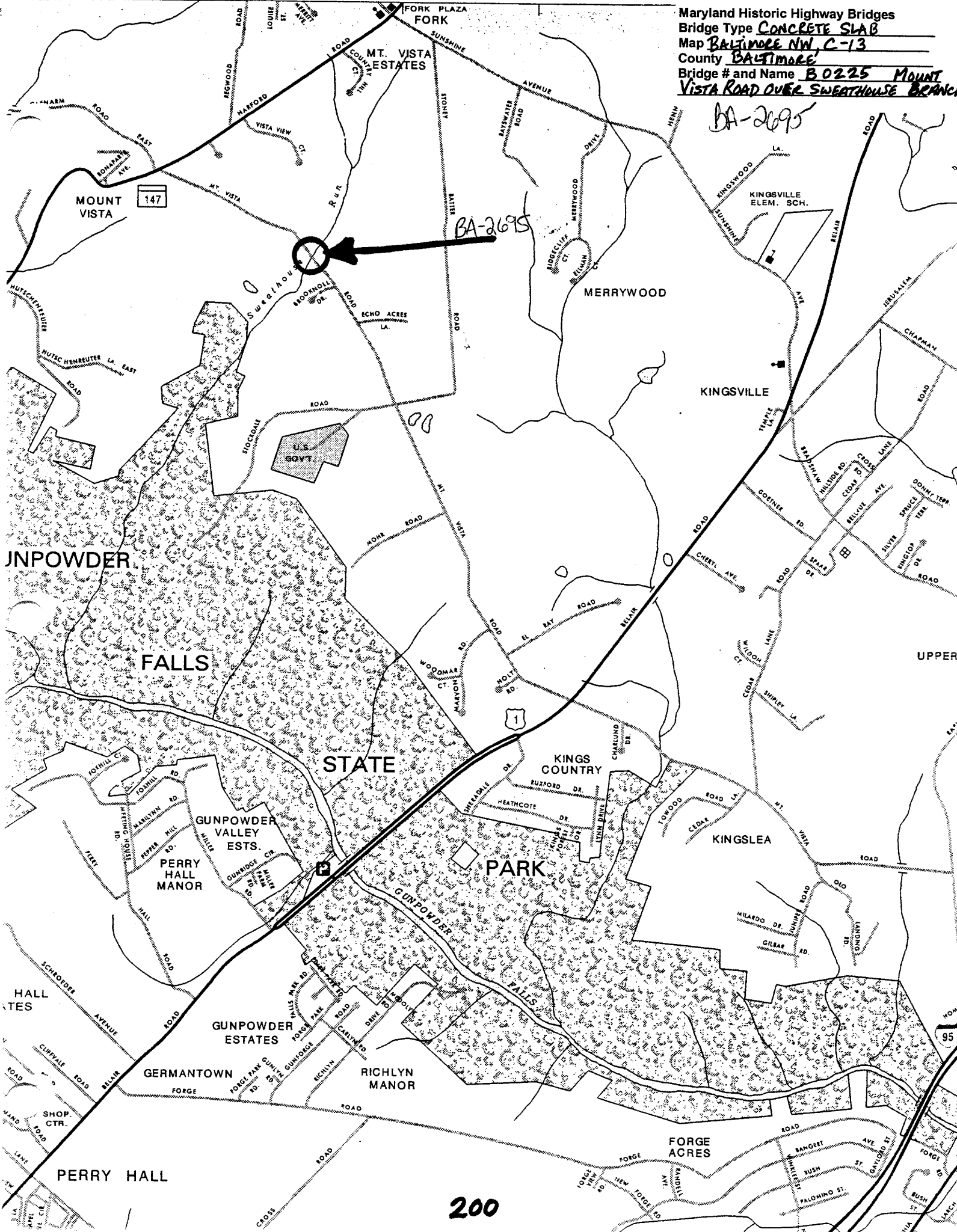
**SURVEYOR:**


Date bridge recorded 08/15/95  
Name of surveyor Colin Farr  
Organization/Address P.A.C. Spero & Company, Suite 412, 40 West Chesapeake Ave., Baltimore,  
MD 21204  
Phone number (410) 296-1635 FAX number (410) 296-1670

Maryland Historic Highway Bridges  
Bridge Type CONCRETE SLAB  
Map BALTIMORE NW, C-13  
County BALTIMORE  
Bridge # and Name B0225 MOUNT  
VISTA ROAD OVER SWEATHOUSE BRANCH




BA-2695

BA-2695



A black and white photograph of a two-lane road curving to the right. The road is flanked by guardrails on both sides. On the right side, a weight limit sign is posted, showing three vehicle icons with their respective weight limits: 15T, 22T, and 40T. The background is a dense forest of trees.

WEIGHT  
LIMIT

	15T
	22T
	40T



Inventory # BA-2695

B0225- MOUNT VISTA RD OVER  
Name SWEAT HOUSE BRANCH

County/State BALTIMORE COUNTY / MD

Name of Photographer DAVE DEHL

Date 1/95

Location of Negative SHA

Description SOUTH APPROACH LOOKING  
NORTH

Number 1 of 24 4



Inventory # BA 2695

BD225 - MT VISTA RD OVER  
Name SWEAT HOUSE BRANCH

County/State BALTIMORE COUNTY/MD

Name of Photographer DAVE DIEHL

Date 1/95

Location of Negative SHA

Description EAST ELEVATION LOOKING  
WEST

Number 2 of 4



Inventory # BA 2695

00225- MT VISTA RD OVER  
Name SWEATHOUSE BRANCH

County/State BALTIMORE COUNTY / MD

Name of Photographer DAVE DIEHL

Date 1/95

Location of Negative SHA

Description WEST ELEVATION LOOKING  
NORTHEAST

3  
Number 12 of 24 4



A black and white photograph of a two-lane road curving to the right. The road is flanked by metal guardrails. On the right side of the road, there is a white rectangular sign with black text. The sign reads "WEIGHT LIMIT" at the top, followed by a table of weight limits for different vehicle types. The background shows a hillside with trees and a small building.

WEIGHT LIMIT	
AXLE	15,000
TRAILER	20,000
TOTAL	35,000

Inventory # BA 2695

B0225 MT VISTA RD OVER  
Name SWEATHOUSE BRANCH

County/State BALTIMORE COUNTY/MD

Name of Photographer DAVE DIEHL

Date 1/95

Location of Negative SHA

Description NORTH APPROACH LOOKING  
SOUTH

4  
Number 13 of 247